

# Singapore: CIQ issue not tied to agreement

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KUALA LUMPUR: Singapore's decision to relocate the rail customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) facilities from Tanjong Pagar to its own territory is a separate issue from the Points of Agreement (POA) signed by the two countries in 1990.

"It is a completely different and separate issue from the POA and status of Malayan Railway land in Singapore or the railway station at Tanjong Pagar.

"The joint CIQ complex at Tanjong Pagar is a carry-over from colonial days when the British governed both countries.

"The relocation of Singapore's CIQ therefore has nothing to do with the POA. It is not dependent on the POA.

"Nor does it in any way affect the legal status of POA in relation to the Malayan Railway land in Singapore or the Tanjong Pagar railway station under the POA," the republic's law ministry said in a statement issued by the Singapore High Commission here yesterday.

It said the POA was a government-to-government agreement subject to international laws and as such the ministry was repeating its offer to

solve the dispute over the POA by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

It said Singapore had proposed that the matter be referred for arbitration and if that was not suitable, the matter could be submitted to the ICJ.

The statement said Malaysia, however, had not responded to the proposal when it was first made.

The dispute arose when Singapore announced its decision to relocate the CIQ facilities from Tanjong Pagar railway station to Woodlands on Aug 1.

Responding to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that that POA had not been ratified by the Malaysian Cabinet or government, the ministry said:

"Nothing in the POA requires it to be ratified by the Cabinet, government, parliament of either country."

Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying: "Points of agreement are points of agreement.

"But treaties are a different matter."

The POA was signed in 1990 between the then Singapore premier Lee Kuan Yew and Tun Daim Zainuddin as Finance Minister on the development of KTM Bhd's land in Singapore.